

HONORING THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE HONORABLE JOHN D. DINGELL'S SERVICE IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

SPEECH OF

HON. DAVID E. PRICE

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 13, 2005

Mr. PRICE of North Carolina. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to join colleagues in recognizing and honoring JOHN DINGELL as he celebrates his fiftieth anniversary as a member of the House of Representatives.

As a young political scientist teaching about the Congress and doing research on the committee system, I knew a good deal about JOHN DINGELL before I joined him in the House in 1987. I studied his role, along with his friend and colleague John Moss, in shaking up the Commerce Committee in the 1970s, decentralizing the then-Chairman's authority and greatly stepping up oversight of the executive. I came to the House hoping that I could someday become a Commerce member myself. By then, JOHN was chairman, and the Committee was the "place to be" for an activist member, known for its broad legislative reach and vigilant oversight.

As it happened, my region had its full quota of Commerce seats, and I successfully pursued Appropriations instead. But I have continued to admire JOHN's work, now as ranking member. He is totally dedicated to this institution as the keystone of American democracy, and he fully understands the importance of active, assertive committees to the institution's capacity for deliberation and sound law-making.

JOHN richly deserves the fulsome tributes we have heard from senior and junior colleagues, of every partisan and political stripe, upon this fiftieth anniversary of his winning the seat vacated by his father's death in 1955. Many have also mentioned Debbie Dingell, JOHN's wife and partner in service. Debbie has been an invaluable resource to the House Democratic Caucus in planning issues conferences and other activities, and I recently was privileged to serve with her on our national party's Commission on Presidential Nomination Timing and Scheduling.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud to join in tribute to JOHN and Debbie DINGELL—to thank them for their dedication and perseverance, for their effectiveness as advocates and public servants, and for what they have meant to each of us and to our country as champions of this institution.

BORDER PROTECTION, ANTITERRORISM, AND ILLEGAL IMMIGRATION CONTROL ACT OF 2005

SPEECH OF

HON. PAUL RYAN

OF WISCONSIN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, December 16, 2005

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 4437) to amend the Immigration and Nationality Act to strengthen enforcement of the immigration

laws, to enhance border security, and for other purposes:

Mr. RYAN of Wisconsin. Mr. Chairman, after long deliberation and discussion with the bill's author, I decided to vote "aye" on H.R. 4437. This bill is far from complete, and far from being ready to become law. Yet, it has become clear that Congress will deal with immigration reform through several stages in a long process during the next session of the 109th Congress. I supported H.R. 4437 to begin this process, so we can ultimately achieve comprehensive immigration reform.

Among the provisions I believe are instrumental toward achieving such reform are the reforms to secure our borders. Border security is no longer simply an issue of illegal immigration. It is an issue of national security, where we are vulnerable to terrorist infiltration. This proposal offers a comprehensive way to address this threat.

However, I have several concerns with this legislation that must be addressed in order to receive my support for a final, comprehensive solution to fixing our broken immigration system.

First and foremost, the provision in H.R. 4437 that makes undocumented alien status a federal felony is totally unacceptable. Prior to the bill's passing, I received a commitment from the author, Chairman SENSENBRENNER, that this provision will be removed. Second, the employer verification system proposed in this bill is unworkable and must be fixed. Third, a final bill should include the creation of a secure, legal channel by which foreign workers needed to keep the United States' economy growing may enter and leave the country. And, finally, we must bring into the open, in a reasonable and fair manner, the millions of immigrants who are living in our communities without any documentation. Failure to address all of these issues will simply prolong our broken immigration system.

Because Congress is so divided on how to achieve comprehensive reform, it has become clear to me that such reform will occur in stages over the course of the next year. I look forward to working with my colleagues in both political parties to make sure the final version of this legislative effort is one we can all be proud to support.

BORDER PROTECTION, ANTITERRORISM, AND ILLEGAL IMMIGRATION CONTROL ACT OF 2005

SPEECH OF

HON. DAVE WELDON

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, December 16, 2005

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 4437) to amend the Immigration and Nationality Act to strengthen enforcement of the immigration laws, to enhance border security, and for other purposes:

Mr. WELDON of Florida. Mr. Chairman, I rise in strong support of H.R. 4437, The Border Protection, Antiterrorism, and Illegal Immigration Control Act of 2005. This is a good bill that takes some important steps to curb illegal immigration, secure our borders and make America safer.

The bill takes a broad range of actions to secure our Nation. These include imposing tougher penalties for those who smuggle illegal immigrants into the U.S. and for those who overstay their visas. Individuals involved in making and using fraudulent documents will face stiffer penalties. We also end the "catch and release" policy that allows apprehended illegal immigrants to slip away unnoticed and live illegally in the U.S. as they will no longer simply be released back into the community.

With regard to granting immigration benefits, i.e., citizenship, green cards, permanent residency, the bill ends the practice of granting such benefits to those for whom a background check has not been completed. Immigration benefits should not be handed out simply because a certain number of days have passed since the investigation was commenced. Perhaps the background check approval is being delayed because of the need to fully investigate a possible criminal or terrorism risks.

Current law denies immigration benefits to those who are classified as habitual drunkards, but not those affiliated with terrorist organizations. This bill fixes that problem by making sure that illegal immigrants who are deportable on terrorist grounds are deported without delay.

H.R. 4437 requires employers to verify that prospective employees are legally employable. The bill ensures that a system is in place for employers to verify the legal status of such job applicants and it provides penalties for employers who violate these laws. The bill also prohibits federal funds provided under the State Criminal Alien Assistance Program to any state or local government that maintains a "sanctuary policy" for illegal immigrants.

In order to ensure that we have a better understanding of just who is crossing illegally into the U.S. the bill requires the Department of Homeland Security, DHS, to report to Congress on the number of illegal aliens apprehended who are from non-contiguous countries, with a particular emphasis on ascertaining the number of individuals from countries known to harbor terrorists. DHS is also to provide the Congress with a timeline for fully equipping all land borders with the US-VISIT entry/exit system.

On a 260-159 vote, the House mandated the construction of security fencing, including lights and cameras, along the Southwest border in sectors with the highest number of illegal border crossings, drug smuggling, and immigrant deaths. Additionally, DHS will be required to conduct a study and report back to Congress on the use of physical barriers along the Northern border.

Mr. Chairman, H.R. 4437 moves us in the right direction of addressing the serious problem of illegal immigration making the United States more secure.

BORDER PROTECTION, ANTITERRORISM, AND ILLEGAL IMMIGRATION CONTROL ACT OF 2005

SPEECH OF

HON. PETER A. DeFAZIO

OF OREGON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, December 16, 2005

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union had under